Archive of Promising Practices

Authors: Brittney Regal (King's College London), Ewan Ferlie (King's College London)
Contact details: Brittney.regal@kcl.ac.uk

Contents

Introduction

The past few years have seen both the rise of charismatic political leaders as well as more collective forms of leadership visible within movements across the world. And in 2020, life massively and rapidly changed as citizens, politicians, and public service workers faced a global pandemic and an unfamiliar future. During this crisis, citizens were told to put their trust in government officials, and yet for many this trust was long lost. Systemic racism and sexism, the global climate emergency, poverty, and threats to personal liberties have long shaken the trusting relationship between public agencies and citizens.

All of these trends have led academics, practitioners, and citizens to reflect on the relationship of citizens and civil society with governments and public agencies. To address this growing trust deficit, public service organisations have increasingly begun exploring bottom-up ways of working. COGOV ('Co-Production and Co-Governance: Strategic Management, Public Value and Co-Creation in the Renewal of Public Agencies across Europe') examines models of strategic management that may help public service organizations overcome barriers to two major ways of bottom-up working: namely, co-creation and co-production.

Co-creation and co-production are potentially powerful tools in renewing public agencies. And while these two terms display varied definitions across both academic and practitioner literatures, both are based on the intent to include citizens and/or civil society in the design, governance, or delivery of public services. They arguably help to decrease the democratic and trust deficits as they can -when done successfully- empower citizens by including them in the design, delivery or governance of public services and projects.

This document sets out the reason behind the selection of the incorporated cases and then explores the context and content of these cases. In particular, it outlines what we see as key promising practices and ways of working across a range of projects and sectors. It is our hope that this document will support public service professionals to work in more inclusive and transparent ways with the communities that they serve and -in turn- address the trust gap which has developed as citizens seek to feel more empowered.

Methodology

As part of the EU Horizon 2020 COGOV project, researchers conducted and provided 15 detailed case studies to produce knowledge about the developmental patterns of downwards-facing approaches of governance. These 15 cases are explored in depth in the fuller report of Work Package Deliverable 2.3 (COGOV.eu/publications/deliverables D2.3 insert link when finalized). As this report highlights key practices rather than providing an overall picture

of the cases, we strongly encourage anyone with an interest in exploring these cases in greater depth to read this report.

This archive of 'promising' practices is based on eight cases from the fuller report. The cases provided below were selected based on case author responses to a questionnaire whereby they reflected on the nature and extent of public service professionals' relationship with civil society and/or service users as well as our (the current authors) analyses of the text of the cases in their entirety. The simple survey asked case authors to rank the nature of the relationship with citizens and civil society on a participation scale. The scale began at 'inform' and moved upwards to different levels of consultation, co-production, collaborative governance and co-creation. This scale was based on a literature review we had previously undertaken (see [Work Package 1.1](#) for more details) as well as a longevity scale. This approach was taken not to exclude the other cases but allow for a more focused repository of promising practices. We have included here the eight cases that were assessed as engaging with citizens or civil society on both operational and strategic levels.

We then read through and analysed the text of the cases selecting practices that appeared to help facilitate the co-creation or co-production process. Thus, the summary section describes the implemented project or strategy and the processes by which it happened (e.g. the summary might include a Youth Forum on policing) while the promising practices section highlights the activities that supported this work (e.g. willingness to visit local schools to talk to students). Promising practices emerged both from the wider work of the organization or municipality as well as in the implementation of the innovation. The document's purpose is to provide guidance for those interested in doing co-production and/or co-creation.

This document uses the term 'promising' practices rather than 'best' practices to highlight that context, historicity and other factors have influenced these cases and would influence any attempt to replicate these cases.

Hard outcomes or evidence are also frequently not available in these sites due to the ongoing nature of the project or innovation. This means that the impacts highlighted below are based on relatively soft assessments from case authors. Thus, we do not want to overclaim the impact of the innovation but rather focus on the promising practices that influenced the bottom-up processes with citizens and service users.

Finally, we are not saying that to implement these practices would guarantee success but rather that these practices were influential in the success of these cases and may be

beneficial for others to consider when designing, creating or working with citizens and or civil society in similar ways.

We have chosen to focus -at the maximum- on seven promising practices per case. We focused on those we deemed were most influential. While the vignettes are the reflections of the authors of this document, we also sought feedback and comments from case authors. The table below describes the title, country and authors of each of the respective cases.

Table 1: Cases which reflected promising practices of bottom-up models of governance

Case	Country	Case Authors
Rijeka: City of Culture LLC	Croatia	Josipa Cvelić, Tatjana Perše, Dr. Sanja Vrbek
Welsh Water's 'Water Resilient Community' Project	Wales	Dr. Irene Pluchinotta, Hannah Williams, Prof Dr Ewan Ferlie, Prof Dr Martin Kitchener
Waltham Forest: London Borough of Culture	England	Dr. Sam van Elk
An (Original) Tandem of Concentration to Solve an Environmental Conflict about Industrial Pollution	France	Dr. Nathalie Boutin
Creating a Public Value Strategy – The Netherlands Enterprise Agency	Netherlands	Prof Dr. Nicolette van Gestel, Dr. Sanne Grotenbreg
Participatory Budgeting – City of Brest	France	Prof Dr Edina Soldo, Dr Céline Duboys, Laura Carmouze, Léonard Gourbrier
Regional Network Governance	Netherlands	Prof Dr Nicolette van Gestel and Dr. Sanne Grotenbreg
Report on the digital innovation Mysuggestion.gov.si (Predlagam.vladi.si)	Slovenia	Dr Sanja Vrbek

Croatia: Rijeka 2020- European City of Culture

<div align="right">Fig 1[1]</div>

Summary

Rijeka 2020 LLC was established to facilitate the implementation of the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture. The Rijeka ECoC project aimed to improve the scope and variety of the regional and city cultural offer through expanding accessibility and participation in culture as well as building capacity within the cultural sector, encouraging collaboration with other sectors and increasing international visibility and profile. The Rijeka 2020 ECoC Participatory Programme aimed to actively involve citizens in the creation of cultural, environmental, and social programs as well as improve the production and organizational capacities of informal individuals and civilian groups. The Participatory Programme consisted of a participatory decision making body (Council of Citizens), two micro-funding programmes (Civil Initiatives and Green Wave), a capacity building programme (Learning to Build Communities) and a physical place for meetings, joint action and education (RiHub).

Impact

The project ends in 2021, but there was (at the time of the research in 2019) an overall sense of satisfaction amongst paricipants of the Participatory Programmes.[2]

Promising Practices

- Hiring a dedicated team of cultural professionals (e.g. intense capacity building program)
- Creating a strong marketing campaign
- Creating an operational action plan past the termination of the ECoC
- Creating a physical place (space) for education, join action, exchanges and meetings (RiHub)
- Creating transparent and easy to understand access systems for citizens

---

[1] RiHub, image provided by Rijeka 2020 press materials. <https://rijeka2020.eu/en/press/download/> Digital Image.
[2] COVID-19 has significantly impacted the project. However, there remain attempts to ensure its legacy.

Wales: Welsh Water

Summary

Welsh Water (WW) is a non-profit water and sewerage company that services most of Wales and parts of western England. When working with communities in the Rhondda Fach, a rural ex-coal mining valley in South Wales, it implemented the 'Water Resilient Community' project. WW looked to upgrade 23km of water pipes running between two towns while maximizing the benefits of WW's presence in the Rhondda Fach. WW focused on supporting local community projects, consulting local business owners, running workshops, community events and seminars in local schools, and saving service users' money through social tariffs and water audit schemes. The community consultation not only directly informed the next business plan but also £30 million was skewed towards community development projects rather than price cuts. WW also worked with external organisations to promote their Community Fund to local not-for-profit groups and organisations.

Impact

Impact assessments from Welsh Water demonstrate that several positive outcomes have been achieved as a result of the project. Firstly, WW has saved customers over £123,000 by registering them to the HelpU social tariff. Secondly, local school children have benefited from WW lessons. Thirdly, six local residents were inspired to join the Prince's Trust 'Get Into Construction Programme'. As well, relationships with community groups and organisations have also flourished, with 23 groups working with WW to change how they operate. Finally, the WW Community Fund has given Rhondda Fach community groups £13,000, enabling them to continue their work.

Promising Practices

- Forming a stakeholder rather than a shareholder-based model of governance.
- Willingness to do a 'deep dive' exercise to better engage and understand the community
- Engaging external organisations with knowledge and understanding of local issues to ensure long-term, sustainable change.
- Willingness to focus on long-term relationship building with communities
- Creating a long-term plan which contains an explicit commitment to co-production with customers and stakeholders across the catchment area;
- Willingness to support community organisations on existing projects.

England: Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture

Fig 2[3]

Summary

The London Borough of Culture (LBoC) is another example of an 'area of culture' programme. The LBoC is run by the Greater London Authority and is a flagship policy in the 2018 London Mayoral Cultural Strategy. Waltham Forest, an outer London borough, was the innagural London Borough of Culture. Some key goals of the programe included greater Londoner involvement, parternships, social conncetions, and focus on people and places. As the LBOC prospecus called for creative collaborations, the local authority council worked to engage residents of the Borough. There were open events to help with design and implementation. There were also small grants awarded by resident panels to local artists and organizations.

Impact

There were positive outcomes including successful initiatives such as *EastSide Story* and the scale and profile of the flagship 'hero' events. However, there were also criticism regarding the underrepresentation of the Borough's ethnic minority populations and young people, particularly during the early part of the year.

Promising Practices

- Creating a sense of commanility through:
    - open spaces
    - shared sense of mission
    - shared cultural references
- Withstanding periods of awkwardness and 'raw' emotions;
- Willingess to learn and grow;
- Willingess to navigate existing formal systems, and helping partners to do so.

---

[3] OneHoeStreet, image provided by Waltham Forest

France: Environmental Conflict about Industrial Pollution

Summary

A 'concertation' (decision-making based on social dialogue) took place in Gardanne, a small industrial town, to address an ongoing environmental conflict. A local alumina plant had been dumping chemical waste in the Mediterranean Sea, and the disposal of this 'red mud' had led to an increase in pollution levels. A change of ownership to Alteo resulted in attempts to drastically reduce the plant's pollution levels and stop discharges into the marine area which had recently been designated a national park. The concertation aimed to reach an agreement on the environmental conflict and increase public participation, and led to the creation of two committees: CSS and CSIRM. Both of which included a range of stakeholders.

Impact

The pollution at sea has been greatly reduced, and the current aim of Alteo is to end all discharge. Evidence suggests that the concertation prevented further escalation of the issues, and helped train citizens and support them in defending their interests. The organization has also implemented various practices to ensure greater transparency and clarity of purpose. However, there has been some drawbacks. This includes less resource for other key issues, the awareness of a lack of concertations in other key industrial activities, and questions around the long-term sustainability of the new systems. The turnover of top civil servants within the Ministry of Environment has also not allowed the lessons of this experience to be fully capitalized.

Promising Practices

- Willingness to change (both to downsizing and increasing of participants)
- Allocation of necessary time and resources
  - Scheduling and organizing frequent meetings with enough time for each participant to present
- Provision of a detailed program for implementation, surveillance, and actions
- Willingess to increase monitoring and control of plant as well as studies
- Mobilizing scientists including social scientists in surveying, assessing and improving procedures

Netherlands: Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Fig 3[4]

Summary

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy oversees the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), which seeks to support entrepreneurs and citizens to achieve a more innovative and sustainable economy and society through offering around 700 products, subsidies, and services. In 2018, RVO adopted the 'Agenda 2022' strategy to respond to societal challenges as well as to focus on developing integrated services, attracting qualified employees and providing data-driven stakeholder support. The focus of the strategy is on creating public value, referring to the United Nations' sustainable development goals. While RVO's professionals do not work often directly with citizens as their work is assigned by public authorities, they link to many external stakeholders (especially interest groups and umbrella organizations) and offer their services to businesses – which of course are staffed by citizens.

Impact

Two formal evaluations highlighted that the new strategy is supported and well-known within the organization. However, there is some dispute about the optimal implementation process and the degree of hierarchical direction and support relative to an emphasis on bottom-up initiatives. Positive outcomes include RVO's contribution to the Dutch Climate Agreement (2019) which includes a range of stakeholder. Another example is RVO's initiative for integral management of Energy Transition, bundling regional policy networks and local pilots from three ministries.

Promising Practices

- Constant monitory of the state of play and sharing of good practices
- Creating a digital database of initiatives in line with the new strategy
- Using knowledge of implementation processes to inform policy makers
- Creating and sharing awareness about the public value to be added
- Stimulating collaboration across organizational and professional borders

---

[4] Netherlands, Pixaby, free for commercial use < https://pixabay.com/photos/wind-mill-tulips-bulbs-tulip-3344661/> Digital Image

France: Brest Participatory Budgeting

Summary

Participatory budgeting is an emergent practice in France. The aim of this tool is to support participatory democracy as well as facilitate the emergence of general interest projects. In 2019, the municipality of Brest made €500,000 available for the implementation of projects proposed by inhabitants. All residents regardless of age or nationality were allowed to participate, and individuals or groups could submit projects. The municipality actively encouraged inhabitants through hosting public debates and co-constructing projects.

Impact

Evidence suggests that this project renewed citizen participation within Brest and each iteration demonstrated greater participation in priority areas. It has also allowed for greater stakeholder influence through the support or challenge of public actions. Internally, there has been greater collaboration between departments and professionals. However, there remains ongoing feasibility and evaluative questions.

Promising Practices

- Planning and working based around long-term relationship building
- Creating clear structures for citizen participation
- Creating an ambassadorial role for citizens and relying on neighbourhood councils (peer-to-peer communication strategy)
- Creating a committee of equal number of inhabitants and elected officials
- Creating a strong marketing and communication campaign (with the necessary funding resources)

Netherlands: Regional Network Governance

Fig 4[5]

Summary

The Netherlands has increasingly implemented initiatives of regional network governance in social and labour market policy. These new initiatives were implemented within 35 labour market regions, a national Program Council, and a national Work Chamber with regional counterparts as coordinating platforms. This type of regional network collaboration is a distinct strategy for renewal by co-production of public and private partners, rather than former attempts of privatisation or pure decentralisation.

Impact

While there have been difficulties with problem perceptions and objectives, there have also been positive outcomes. For example, seven municipalities and the public agency for employee insurance and employment services (UWV) and Randstad (private HR service industry) joined forces in a regional agency to facilitate job matching. Another positive impact has been the results of the Job Agreement (for people with physical/mental restrictions) made in 2013 between the government and social partners which was then formalised in the Job Agreement Act 2015.

Promising Practices

- Formatting regions/networks around key identities and goals
- Developing long term relationships (both internally and externally)
- Formulating concrete, short-term goals that are shared
- Choosing to work on aims that necessitate collaboration rather than collaboration for collaboration's sake
- Sharing knowledge in platforms about barriers and solutions in implementation

---

[5] Business, Pixaby, free for commercial use < https://pixabay.com/photos/paper-business-finance-document-3213924/> Digital Image

Slovenia: Mysuggestion.gov.si

Summary

The Slovenian Government Communications Office initiated the e-participation website 'mysuggestion.gov.si'. The aim was to provide citizens direct two-way communication. Through the online portal citizens can challenge existing legislation, set the policy agenda through raising and proposing solutions to problems as well as discuss and vote for policy ideas. Proposals that received significant popular support qualify for consideration for actual implementation by the relevant institutions.

Impact

Slovenia's score on the e-participation index may have increased in part due to this innovation. As well, there were some interesting citizens' initiatives implemented. However, there are inconsistent estimations around the number of implemented initiatives. This has resulted in criticisms from experts who highlight the partial or low implementation rate.

Promising Practices

- Creating a non-traditional network within the Government that allowed for significant level of flexibility, while at the same time securing clear division of roles and responsibility.
- Willingness to foster environment inclusive of support from top political leaders or bodies
- Holding consistent meetings which all input and feedback from staff
- Creating a clear marketing and communication plan
- Ensuring the creation of a user-friendly portal (online space)

Conclusion

There are some patterns of practices across all the vignettes and listed below:

- Creating a sense of community (within the organization and with collaborators);
- Focus on relationship-building;
- Ensuring communication (internally and externally) is transparent and easy to understand;
- Willingness to learn and adapt when necessary;
- Creating capacity through for example hiring staff, changing structures, or allocating time;
- Ensuring that purpose and goals are easy to understand (both internally and externally);
- Creating a plan which explicitly includes enhanced stakeholder participation.

The cases presented represent three different areas of working: environment; culture; and government, industry and administration. It also represented different actors with whom public agencies now work such as civil society, citizens (individual or groups) and service users. The cases also span across Europe from Slovenia, to the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, and Croatia. They represented some of what the team see as the most promising cases of bottom-up ways of working with citizens and service users at both a strategic and operational level. It is our hope that this document- as a supplement to others that can be found on http://COGOV.eu/publications/deliverables/- will support local political leaders, public managers and practitioners as they seek to engage society in innovative ways of organizing and delivering public services by highlighting key practices that supported project or organizational success and may be useful to others who similarly seek to co-produce or co-create.

Fig 5[6]

---

[6] Alteo and Gardanne, Matthieu Collin, image shared by photographer for inclusion